

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL.
CINCINNATI 29, OHIO.

ELLAND AND BETHESDA AVES.

March 28, 1948

Dr. Michael Heidelberger
Department of Biochemistry
Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center
New York, New York

Dear Dr. Heidelberger:

I write to explain my visit to your laboratory a few days ago on which I failed to meet you. I had taken a quick trip to New York City to see the Merck Fellowship Board about my application for a Merck Fellowship of the NRC and took the opportunity to transport to your dry ice ice box a supply of nephritic and control sera I had collected. They had all been promptly separated after venepuncture and had been kept frozen in dry ice here and en route to New York.

I had written to you a week or so ago about the possibility of getting a few more complement titrations done in your laboratory to settle the problem of complement in nephritis. In that letter I outlined the extent to which the previous studies had been carried.

The sera which I brought to you were serial sera drawn during the course of acute glomerulonephritis on 9 nephritic children (We have been having an unprecedented run of this disease here). There are included several normal sera from children the same ages as controls. This single batch of some 30-35 sera should be sufficient to prove rather conclusively the suspected complement drop in acute glomerulonephritis since it constitutes a large enough series with certain enough diagnoses and with adequate controls. I have listed in the notebook the case histories and dates samples were drawn etc. on all sera which are recorded according to the number on the tubes. You are welcome to the record book if you should find it possible to have the titrations done someday.

I apologize for leaving the sera before I discussed the matter with you. I trust they will not be in the way, for they are all included in one large can. One tube - the only large tube present - is not numbered and that tube bears the patient's name on it. It is a specimen which stood 24 hours in an ice box before freezing and, although its complement value would be of interest, it is not as carefully handled a specimen as the rest in the series. Tube No. 8 appears 3 times. This is because the single serum specimen was separated into three different containers (plastic, glass with cork, glass with stopper) in order to check reproducibility of results of sera treated similarly and stored slightly differently.

I am continuing to draw sera - no longer in the random fashion in which I first drew them while in New York - but according to a plan to obtain frequent sera on nephritics during convalescence to check the regeneration of complement. Also, a few scarlet fever cases will be so followed in the hope of picking up a nephritic before nephritis is clinically evident and also in order to settle the argument that antibody production to strep per se - without nephritic complication - in post-scarlet fever patients produces a drop in complement. I do not believe there is any basis for such a claim.

Again I beg your pardon for having been unable to wait longer at P & S to see you and discuss the possibility of someone there doing the titrations.

If it proves impossible, I hope you will not mind maintaining the sera in frozen state in the package in which they rest until I can someday find the time and

fascillities to handle them. I am convinced that the group of sera form a highly significant sample which in themselves should prove or disprove the supposition which was strongly supported by the previous work.

I have been awarded the National Research Council Fellowship in Medical Science and this I shall use next fall at California Institute of Technology. I had also applied to the Merck Fellowship Board and that board requested the interview which brought me to New York. I do not know whether they also awarded me a fellowship or not. If they have done so, it will be a difficult problem to decide which to take.

Again, I thank you for your help last year. I shall send you a complete table of the serum specimens which have been left in the far dry ice ice box on your floor.

Respectfully yours,

D. Carleton Gajdusek
D. Carleton Gajdusek M.D.

P.S. The plastic tubes -sterilized with ultraviolet) have been used for frozen sera for a long time by Dr. Sabin in his virology work here. Sera are well stored in these without the danger of breakage during thawing and refreezing and Dr. Sabin has not found pH changes occurring in tubes tightly closed which interfere with antibody or virus studies. I should like your opinion of their use?

D.C.G.